

The President's Daily Brief

8 May 1973

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

8 May 1973

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

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Japan

(Page 2)

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Seasonal rains have halted Chinese road building in some areas of northwest Laos, but preparations appear to be under way for renewing construction once the monsoon ends in the fall. (Page 3)

The Khmer Communist leadership in Cambodia has indicated that there are still definite limits to its support for Sihanouk. (Page 4)

US Consul General Leonhardy was released unharmed by Mexican guerrillas last night. (Page 5)

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LEBANON-FEDAYEEN

The flare-up of fighting in Beirut that began yesterday has continued through the night. Rockets were fired at army positions near the Palestinian refugee camps and the airport. The renewal of hostilities prompted Prime Minister Hafiz to declare a state of emergency and once again to submit his resignation.

The renewed fighting, which began just after a government announcement that progress had been made in settling differences with the guerrillas, apparently reflects a determined effort by fedayeen extremists to prevent the cease-fire from taking hold. They probably fear that Fatah leader Yasir Arafat, in negotiations with the government, had agreed to a formula that imposes further restrictions on the guerrillas. No representatives of the extremist splinter groups attended meetings yesterday between the government and mainstream elements of the guerrilla movement.

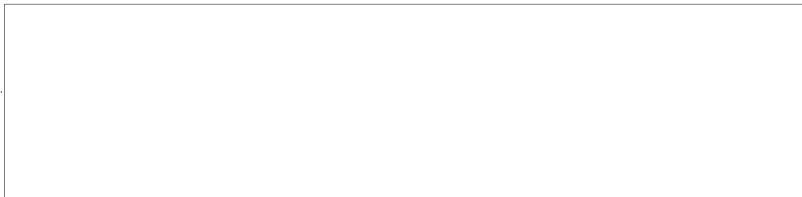
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The breach in the cease-fire may have been staged by the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine. The Front reportedly had made an earlier, unsuccessful attempt to incite a resumption of fighting.

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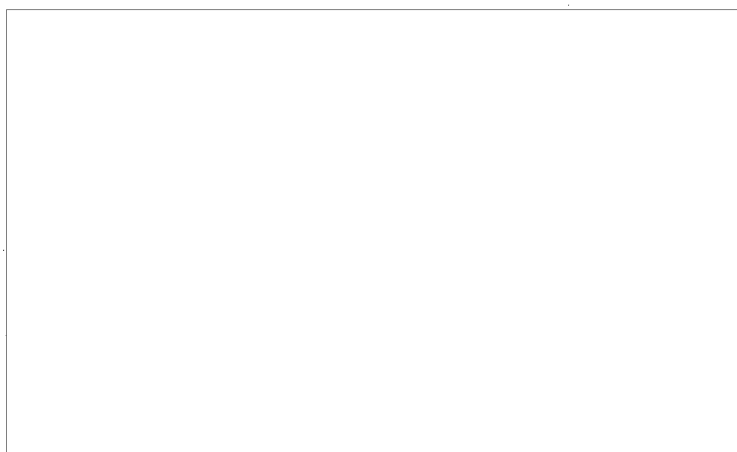
JAPAN



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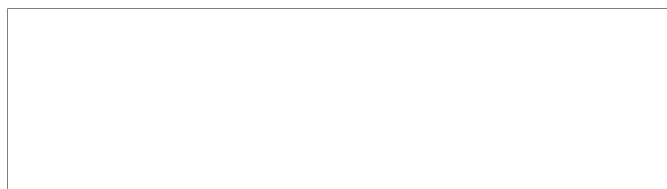
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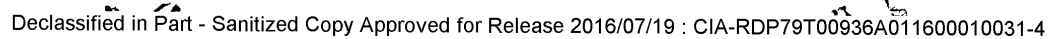
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CHINA-LAOS

Seasonal rains have halted Chinese road building in some areas of northwest Laos, but preparations appear to be under way for renewing construction once the monsoon ends in the fall. Chinese crews have begun preliminary work for a road east from Muong Sai--the hub of the existing roadnet--which could be the first phase of an extension of the system into the Nam Ou Valley.

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Construction of these new projects would require at least one full dry season. Even if they are not undertaken, Chinese crews would be kept occupied well into 1974 in order to complete work already under way.

Prime Minister Souvanna as well as Peking has based the continued presence of Chinese construction units in Laos on economic aid pacts signed in the early 1960s. Souvanna may seek new agreements once a new coalition government is formed, and Peking may view this as a way of legitimizing its presence.

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CAMBODIA

The Khmer Communist leadership in Cambodia has indicated that there are still definite limits to its support for Sihanouk. According to a message of April 16--which has just become available--from the Khmer Communists' Central Committee to several subordinate regions, Sihanouk's trip in March to the "liberated zone" was in line with "party objectives and the political goals of the front." The message goes on to say that "as for Sihanouk and his factions...we make a front with him and he makes a front with us; this is very excellent."

The message then appears to call for some restrictions on the propaganda treatment in Cambodia on Sihanouk's views "in order to avoid reinforcing and expanding Sihanouk's power."

This is the second time in recent months that the Central Committee has expressed some concern about Sihanouk. In a message of February 2, the committee fretted over the possibility of a meeting in Hanoi between Sihanouk and Dr. Kissinger. It noted that "Sihanouk's position has been independent of ours"--implying that Sihanouk could not be trusted in any meeting with Dr. Kissinger.

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NOTE

Mexico: US Consul General Leonhardy was released unharmed by urban guerrillas last night. The guerrillas' successful tactics and the government's quick acquiescence to their demands are likely to encourage similar operations in the future.

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